THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) to (c) The parents of soldiers and officers are entitled to Medical/Dental treatment from Service Institutions on the basis of entitlement certificates. Besides they are also entitled for all Canteen facilities except liquor on production of dependent identity card issued by the competent authority. Provision of more facilities to the parents of service personnel is an on-going exercise and reviewed from time to time based on need.

Laying of mines in Indian territory by Pak Troops

3430. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recently Pakistani troops have been sneaking into Indian space and laying mines in the Indian territory particularly along Punjab border;

(b) if so, how many casualties occurred due to such mining; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to intensify patrolling ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) No, Sir. However a total of sixteen anti-personnel and one anti-tank mine with Pak markings were recovered in the Khemkaran Sector of Punjab on four occasions between 16th December, 2002 and 29th January, 2003. Since these mines were about 10 to 20 metres inside our territory, they could have possible been thrown by Pak troops from their side of the International Border (IB).

(b) One BSF Constable was injured when he stepped on an anti-personnel mine in the same sector.

(c) Patrolling and surveillance have been stepped up all along the IB to prevent recurrence of such an incident.

laying of mines during military mobilizations

3431. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that one million mines were laid during military mobilisation after the December, 2001 Parliament attack;

(b) whether Government have since started demining operations and the areas are being handed over back to the farmers;

(c) if so, how much area have since been handed over to farmers in the border States; and

(d) by when the remaining area would be demined and transferred to farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) A total of approximately 10.5 lakh mines were laid during the mobilisation of army in December, 2001.

(b) and (c) Approximately 71% of the total mines have been completely demined so far. The demined areas are handed over to the farmers/owners in the presence of the State Government officials and village representatives. The information regarding the area of the land mined/demined cannot be disclosed for 'security' reasons.

(d) Exact time-frame for demining the area cannot be determined at this stage.

Indo-US Defence Policy Group Meet in India

3432. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Indo-US Defence Policy Group has met in India recently to discuss about defence cooperation ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF. CHAMAN LAL GUPTA) : (a) No, Sir. The Indo-US Defence Policy Group (DPG) last met in USA in May, 2002.

(b) Does not arise.

Supply of Falcon Aircrafts by Israel

3433. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Israel has shown some reservations on the supply of Falcon Aircrafts to India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there has been any violation of the terms and conditions agreed upon for the supply of aircrafts;

(d) steps being taken to ensure adherence to the contract for timely supply of aircrafts by Israel; and